

A Self-Assessment Tool for Vermont Parents

Certain attitudes and behaviors may make alcohol more appealing to your child. The following brief self-assessment worksheet could help you see what type of messages you could be sending to your child about alcohol.

OFTEN	SOMETIMES	NEVER	
			Do you make lighthearted or joking comments about other people's heavy drinking? (i.e. "He's got a hollow leg." Or "She holds her liquor well.")
			Do you tell funny or glorified stories about you or your friend's drinking antics when you were younger?
			Do you ask your child to get you a drink from the fridge?
			Do you wear t-shirts, baseball caps, etc. that advertise or promote drinking and/or specific brands of alcohol?
			When watching television with your child, do you laugh at scenes where alcohol is being abused?
			Do you see (and communicate this view to your child) drinking as a rite of passage for teenagers that can't be avoided?
			Do you host adult social gatherings at your home where alcoholic beverages are the only drinks served and/or where drinking is the central focus of the gathering?
			Do you assume that alcohol is a necessary part of any celebration or social gathering?
			Do you model using alcohol as a stress reduction tool? (i.e. comments like "I've had a long day, I need a drink!")
			Do you offer alcohol to your teen as a "special treat" for celebrations, family gatherings, etc.?
			Do you host parties at your house where alcohol is served or available to teens?
			Does your child observe you drinking more than 2 or 3 drinks on any one occasion?

If you answered "often" or "sometimes" two or more times, you might be unintentionally sending mixed messages to your child, and could be implying that it's OK for him or her to drink or experiment with alcohol. Your children look to you for guidance, so try to remain clear and consistent about the messages you are sending about the dangers of early and high-risk alcohol use. Remember that alcohol impacts youth differently than adults.